

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

***Arlington School Committee
Standing Subcommittee: Policies and Procedures
Monday, May 1, 2023
8:00 AM***

In person:

*Arlington High School
6th Floor - Superintendent's Office
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476*

Or via Zoom:

*Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85785874799>*

Meeting ID: 857 8587 4799

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

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+1 309 205 3325 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 507 473 4847 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 689 278 1000 US

+1 719 359 4580 US

+1 253 205 0468 US

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Meeting ID: 857 8587 4799

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcAKGzzPkX>

Open Meeting (P. Schlichtman)

*There will be no **Public Comment** agenda item. As part of the agenda, members of the public who wish to comment on individual agenda items will have the opportunity*

to join the discussions.

Approval of Minutes, April 24, 2023 (P. Schlichtman)

-Minutes, April 24, 2023

Policies and procedures pertaining to curriculum challenges, including but not limited to:

File BEE - Special Procedures for Conducting Hearings

File IJ - Instructional Materials

File IJ-R - Reconsideration of Instructional Resources

File IJL - Library Materials Selection and Adoption

File KE - Public Complaints

File KEC - Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Curriculum Materials (Retired)

Policy change recommendations from J. Thielman

Future Agenda Items

Adjournment (P. Schlichtman)

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Paul Schlichtman

Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the meeting, contact the Administrative Assistant to the Arlington School Committee Liz Diggins at ediggins@arlington.k12.ma.us.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Meeting Location - Hybrid

Summary:

In person:

Arlington High School
6th Floor - Superintendent's Office
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

Or via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85785874799>

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+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 360 209 5623 US

+1 386 347 5053 US

+1 507 473 4847 US

+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

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+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

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Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Open Meeting (P. Schlichtman)

Summary:

There will be no **Public Comment** agenda item. As part of the agenda, members of the public who wish to comment on individual agenda items will have the opportunity to join the discussions.



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Approval of Minutes, April 24, 2023 (P. Schlichtman)

Summary:

-Minutes, April 24, 2023

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▢ Minutes	April_24_Draft_Minutes_-_for_Approval.pdf	April 24, Draft Meeting Minutes

**Arlington School Committee
Standing Subcommittee: Policies and Procedures
Monday, April 24, 2023
8:00 a.m.
Superintendent's Office
Sixth Floor, Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476**

AGENDA

Open Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. The meeting was hybrid, permitting participation via Zoom.

Subcommittee members present: Paul Schlichtman, Jeff Thielman, Laura Gitelson

Also Present: Elizabeth Homan, Superintendent

Members of the Public:

Julie Hall, 189 Jason Street (via Zoom).

There was no **Public Comment** agenda item, but members of the public who wished to comment on individual agenda items were invited to comment as they were considered.

Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2022

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, **seconded** by Ms. Gitelson, it was **voted** to approve the minutes of November 21, 2022. (3-0)

Policies and procedures pertaining to curriculum challenges, including but not limited to:

- File BEE - SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS
- File IGD - CURRICULUM ADOPTION
- File IJ - INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
- File IJ-R - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES
- File IJL - LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION
- File KE – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS
- File KEC – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR CURRICULUM MATERIALS (RETIRED)

Mr. Thielman presented a draft revision of File IGD - CURRICULUM ADOPTION. The subcommittee discussed the language as presented and made suggestions for minor edits.

Mr. Thielman presented a draft revision of File IJ-R - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES. The subcommittee discussed the language as presented and made suggestions for minor edits.

Mr. Schlichtman read an email from Mr. Kardon, expressing concern about the first draft published in Novus. The subcommittee agreed to incorporate language into the policy to address Mr. Kardon's concerns. The subcommittee clarified procedural language in the policy.

Mr. Schlichtman suggested presenting the current drafts of File IGD and File IJ-R to the full committee for their comments, to solicit comments from the remaining committee members. The subcommittee agreed to meet again at 8:00 a.m., Monday, May 1 to consider comments and suggestions arising from presenting the proposals for first reading.

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, **seconded** by Ms. Gitelson, it was **voted** to present File IGD and File IJ-R to the full school committee for a first reading at its April 27 meeting. (3-0)

Future Agenda Items

None.

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Thielman, **seconded** by Ms. Gitelson, it was **voted** to adjourn at 10:02 a.m.

File: IGD - CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school system, align with state standards, and respond to the changing needs of students. The district's professional staff continually evaluates existing and new curricula, piloting curricula in development as appropriate.

The Superintendent will have the authority to approve new programs and courses of study. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach. Extensive alterations in instructional content that require School Committee approval may include but are not limited to, changes to the objectives or major topics of curricula that carry significant budget ramifications for the district or the adoption of a new instructional resource in a core content area.

The Committee will be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curricula that are under consideration. The School Committee's acceptance of the high school program of studies, including a listing of courses, will constitute its adoption of the high school curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [15:1G](#); [71:1](#); [69:1E](#)

File: IJ-R – RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Any resident of the Town of Arlington, parent or guardian of an Arlington Public School student, or any employee of the Arlington Public Schools may request that the district reconsider the use of instructional resources, including materials housed in school libraries, curriculum materials, and other resources that support the education of Arlington's students.

No materials subject to a request for reconsideration shall be removed from a school, curriculum, educational program, or school library pending a final decision.

Initial Step: School-Level Reconsideration

Any parent or guardian of an Arlington Public School student, Town Resident, or Arlington Public School employee objecting to the use of instructional resources must first request a meeting with the principal of the school where the materials are being used to discuss their concern. During this meeting, the principal and school or district staff who join the meeting will provide information regarding the selection and use of the instructional resources and explain the philosophy and goals of the curriculum related to the instructional resources in question.

If the instructional resources are being used in multiple schools, the complainant(s) shall request a meeting with the principal of their student's school, the school in which they work if they are an Arlington Public School employee, or the school closest to their home if they are an Arlington resident.

At any time in the school-level reconsideration phase, the Superintendent or their designee may choose to meet with the complainant, with or without the presence of the principal of the school where the instructional resources are used or housed. The Superintendent may direct that a meeting with district staff take place in the school-level reconsideration phase in lieu of an initial meeting with a school principal.

If the school district is in the process of evaluating the continued use of instructional resources that are the subject of the request for reconsideration, a complaint may not move to the formal reconsideration stage until the district completes its internal evaluation process.

District Level Reconsideration

If the complainant(s) is not satisfied with the response given during the school-level (initial step) reconsideration, the complainant may enter the district-level reconsideration process by emailing or writing to the Superintendent of Schools or their designee to make a formal request for reconsideration. Upon receipt of a request for reconsideration, the Superintendent's Office shall provide the complainant with a copy of this policy, and the Superintendent shall inform the School Committee of the request for district-level reconsideration.

The Superintendent may choose not to pursue a reconsideration at the district level, make a determination on the complaint, and report their findings to the School Committee.

A written request for reconsideration of instructional resources shall include the following:

- A description of the instructional resources the person or persons objects to and their use in instruction,
- A summary of why the person or persons raising the objection believes the instructional resources should not be used or housed by the Arlington Public Schools,
- Any research or other materials to support their positions, and
- The date, time, place, and any additional information on the meeting the person or persons had with the school principal and other school staff during the informal reconsideration process.

The Superintendent has the authority to determine if the request for reconsideration provides sufficient information to warrant the calling of an Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee. Within 20 working days of receiving the request for reconsideration of instructional resources, provided that the materials are sufficient for committee review, the Superintendent or their designee shall appoint and schedule a meeting of an Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee of administrators, classroom teachers, support staff, community members, parents, and, if appropriate, students. The Superintendent shall select the Chair of the Committee and its members. The committee shall include individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences, including district and school staff who are subject matter experts on the instructional resources in question and others from the district with experience in curriculum development and implementation.

The Superintendent or their designee shall provide the Committee with copies of materials submitted by the person or persons raising the objection as well as any other appropriate information related to the challenged materials. At the scheduled meeting, the person or persons raising the objection shall have the opportunity to address the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee.

The Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee will consider the information presented and, if appropriate, vote to remove or retain the instructional materials in question or vote to ask that the materials be modified in some way. Within five (5) working days of the final Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee's meeting on the complaint, the Committee shall issue a written report that summarizes the information presented, any votes taken, and any recommendations made. If any members of the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee disagree with the decision of the majority of committee members, the written report must include a section explaining dissenting views.

Within five (5) working days of receiving the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee's written report and decision, the Superintendent or their designee shall notify the person or persons who filed the complaint in writing of the decision of the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Review Committee and shall share with the complainant(s) the written report of the Committee, including any votes taken and recommendations made.

Appeal to the School Committee

The complainants may appeal a decision of the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee to the Arlington School Committee. The complainant must file a notice of appeal in writing, including by email, to the Chair and Secretary of the School Committee within 10 working days of receiving the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Review Committee's written report and decision from the Superintendent or their designee.

When such an appeal is filed with the Arlington School Committee, the office of the Superintendent will forward to the Committee a copy of the Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee's written report and any supporting materials related to the request for reconsideration, including the original materials filed by the person or persons raising the objections.

The School Committee shall place the appeal on the agenda of its next regularly scheduled meeting during which time the Committee may choose to send the appeal to a subcommittee for further deliberation or schedule a vote on the appeal by the full Committee at a subsequent meeting. The Committee shall follow its agenda setting and other procedures in place for

meetings for any deliberations related to an appeal of a decision by an Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee.

Time Limitation

Once a request for reconsideration of instructional resources has been resolved through the formal reconsideration process, the decision will not be reconsidered for three complete school years, commencing with the end of the academic year when the decision was made. This applies to decisions reached by an Instructional Resources Reconsideration Committee that are not appealed to the School Committee as well as decisions made by the School Committee.

REF: File BEDB (Agenda Format/Preparation and Dissemination); File IGD (Curriculum Adoption)



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Policies and procedures pertaining to curriculum challenges, including but not limited to:

Summary:

File BEE - Special Procedures for Conducting Hearings

File IJ - Instructional Materials

File IJ-R - Reconsideration of Instructional Resources

File IJL - Library Materials Selection and Adoption

File KE - Public Complaints

File KEC - Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Curriculum Materials (Retired)

Policy change recommendations from J. Thielman

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
▣ Policy	File_BEE.pdf	File BEE
▣ Policy	File_IJ.pdf	File IJ
▣ Policy	File_IJ-R_-_Current.pdf	File IJ-R - Current
▣ Policy	File_IJ-R_(Paul_s_Revision).pdf	File IJ-R (Paul's Revision)
▣ Policy	File_IJL.pdf	File IJL
▣ Policy	File_KE.pdf	File KE

File: BEE - SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others as it deems advisable, the School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy.

The Chairperson of the Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the Chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

File: IJ - INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual orientation.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30B:7](#); [71:48](#); [71:49](#); [71:50](#)

BESE regulations 603 CMR [26.00](#)

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

File: IJ-R - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion-Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies-Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/Obscenity-Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

File: IJ-R - RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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Religion-Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

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Profanity/Obscenity-Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time. ~~using District adopted procedures.~~

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

A challenge shall be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent shall notify the School Committee of the challenge at the next regular meeting of the School Committee. The Superintendent shall solicit written public comment from members of the community. The Superintendent may convene a Review Committee to assist in evaluating the questioned materials. No more than 20 school days after receiving the challenge, the Superintendent shall make a recommendation to the School Committee for the disposition of the challenge. The School Committee, by majority vote, may restrict or remove the questioned materials. In the absence of a vote by the School Committee, the questioned instructional materials shall be deemed to be retained.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

File: IJL - LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)

CROSS REF.: KEC, Public Complaints about the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

File: KE - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

When a staff member receives a complaint, the School Committee expects the staff member to do so courteously and to make an appropriate reply.

The School Committee believes that complaints and concerns are best addressed and resolved as close to their origin as appropriate to the circumstances. Thus, the Committee encourages individuals to present and discuss any complaints they may have with the staff member against whom the complaint is directed whenever appropriate. If the individual is not comfortable addressing the matter with the staff member, or if the matter remains unresolved after doing so, the individual may address the complaint to the Building Principal or his/her designee or to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee as a whole or to a School Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution, provided that the School Committee may directly address complaints regarding the conduct or performance of the Superintendent where appropriate.

Should dissatisfaction remain after the above steps have been taken, the complainant may contact the School Committee Chair, who shall arrange for the School Committee to address the matter if the Chair deems appropriate



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Future Agenda Items



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Adjournment (P. Schlichtman)



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Submitted by Paul Schlichtman